



Native Trails—empowering Central American Craftspeople

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Naomi and her son in their San Luis Obispo Native Trails Showroom-
Photo Credit Tom Wilmer

When Naomi Neilson Howard was a student at Cal Poly State University in the 1990s, she would make family forays to Central America. It was in the midst of one of her sojourns to Mexico when she had a transformative moment, which led her to create a business that would empower local artisans through the creation of an import business in 1996. Naomi's little start up was launched from her small cottage on Walnut Street in San Luis Obispo while still working on her undergraduate degree at Cal Poly. Today her pocket-sized business has grown to become an incredibly successful operation, specializing in high-end, hand-crafted kitchen and bath products, from sinks to tubs and more, with sales to the trade around the world, from Hong Kong to Dubai. *Native Trails'* offices and warehouse remain headquartered in San Luis Obispo in a non-descript commercial complex just off South Higuera Street. Join Correspondent, Tom Wilmer for a fascinating conversation with Ms. Howard, as we discover how she has created a greater good company, specializing in [sustainable products](#), much of it from recycled materials. Today her finely crafted products are made from reclaimed barn wood, wine staves and barrels, bamboo, and recycled copper. Howard's extraordinarily successful business offers incredible economic opportunities for artisans from throughout Central America to right here on the Central Coast.

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